

40 Days of Prayer and Fasting

October 31st

Daily Devotional #31

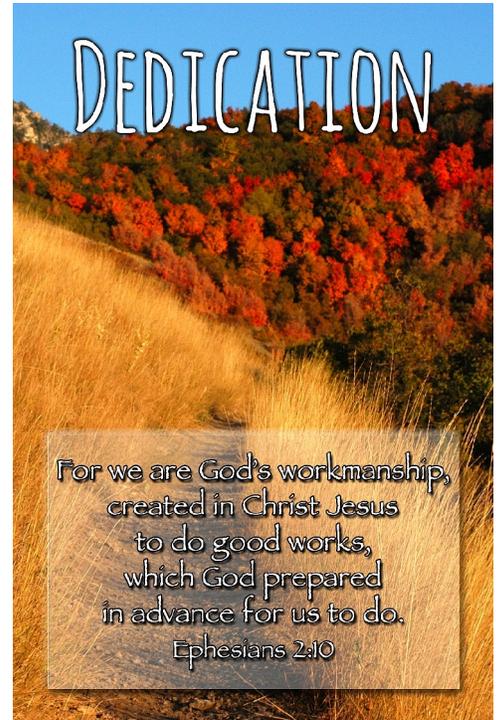
We Are in the Season of DEDICATION

As We Ask, "What Is GOD Preparing Us/for Us to Do?"

For we are what He has made us,
created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which GOD prepared beforehand
to be our way of life.

Ephesians 2:10 (NRSV)

Today we begin our "Season of DEDICATION" – an incredibly serious time for us to resolve to fully follow and commit to the leadership and discipline(s) of GOD. Our theme Scripture for this Season of Dedication is Ephesians 2:10. I've included two versions of this verse (the Poster uses the NIV and this article begins with the NRSV). Both are accurate, but they "feel" very different.



Before we start digging, please know I'm asking you to put on the hat of an interested, even "hungry", student. Read the next few paragraphs slowly and intently. Chew on them, argue with them, allow the Spirit to remind you of other Scriptures that are part of GOD's thoughts on this. What we are jumping into in the Season of Dedication is not easy, but it is very, very good.

Now, back to Ephesians 2:10...

When you compare the two, the NIV, which we are more familiar with, "feels" like an encouraging pat-on-the-back. GOD is taking care of things. He's doing the planning and preparing (all the hard work and heavy lifting), and our job is to go about our daily lives and identify, take advantage of, and do those prepared-in-advance good works. That's mostly correct, but is actually a considerable "soft sell" on what Ephesians is teaching us, and what GOD is calling us to.

By comparison, the NRSV almost "feels" clunky and maybe even a bit heavy-handed. It's not as immediately encouraging. In fact, it "feels" considerably more challenging. The NRSV talks about engaging in these good works as a "way of life" as opposed to the NIV's "feel" of "if you see an opportunity, take advantage of it." The Greek favors the NRSV as it literally says, concerning the good works GOD has prepared: that we are His "made-things created in Christ Jesus" and that in these good works

GOD has prepared “in them we might walk around.” The word here is the aorist active form of “peripateō” (we might walk around) and is a standard euphemism of that time for “rule or manner of life”, “to live or behave in the prescribed manner.”

When you consider the whole of Ephesians, combined with the rest of Paul’s writings (along with the Gospels, the Old Testament, and the other New Testament writings (Hebrews through Revelation, and Acts)), this verse is calling on us to have a dedicated, uncompromising, focused, sacrificing (dare I say, “radical”) way of life. GOD is inviting us (individually and as Family) to live a life of obedient service to GOD for the sake His Kingdom and His Will. In a very real sense, we are accepting GOD’s plea, His loving call that we are “enough”, to become His knights – greatly disciplined, highly prepared, expertly trained servants always representing and honoring their sacred King.

As we enter our “Season of Dedication”, let’s gratefully join together, continue to purify and cleanse our lives, attentively “stand and wait”, and commit to carry the banner of our King with sacrificial dedication!